

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 02998 240436Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----011270 240437Z /20
O 240353Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5536

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 2998

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (FUKUDA, TAKEO), PFOR, JA, US
SUBJECT: FUKUDA VISIT

REF: STATE 46226

1. AFTER EMBASSY HAD REQUESTED APPOINTMENT FOR AMBASSADOR WITH PRIME MINISTER TO CARRY OUT INSTRUCTIONS REFTEL, DCM RECEIVED CALL FROM PRIME MINISTER'S PRIVATE SECRETARY OWADA WHO SAID THAT PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE HAS BEEN UNDER DAILY BARRAGE OF PRESS QUESTIONS REGARDING STATUS OF VISIT. UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES, HE BELIEVED CALL BY AMBASSADOR--ESPECIALLY IF NO RESULTS COULD BE ANNOUNCED IMMEDIATELY--WOULD ONLY STIMULATE UNDESIRABLE SPECULATION THAT SOMEHOW OR OTHER SOMETHING HAD GONE WRONG. HE BELIEVED THAT AN ATTEMPT TO CHARACTERIZE THE CALL AS RELATED TO OTHER SUBJECTS WOULD NOT BE CREDIBLE OR POSSIBLE TO SUSTAIN WITH PRESS.

2. THEREFORE, WITH AMBASSADOR'S CONCURRENCE, DCM ARRANGED TO PRESENT INVITATION AND ITS RATIONALE TO OWADA 9:30 A.M. FEBRUARY 24 WHO UNDERTOOK TO CONVEY ITS CONTENTS TO PRIME MINISTER AND REPORT HIS DECISION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

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3. FOLLOWING MEETING WITH OWADA, AND AT HIS REQUEST, DCM CONVEYED SAME INFORMATION TO DIRECTOR GENERAL AMERICAN AFFAIRS MOFA NAKAJIMA.

4. WE HAVE HAD SOME DISCUSSION WITH BOTH PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE AND MOFA CONCERNING PRESS HANDLING. AS NOTED ABOVE, PRESS INTEREST HERE IS INTENSE AND

COMPLICATED BY FACT THAT NEWSMEN THINK THEY HAVE
DISCOVERED SOME SORT OF CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING
SELECTION OF DATES. PRIME MINISTER IS THEREFORE
ANXIOUS TO BE ABLE TO RELEASE FINAL DECISION AS SOON
AS POSSIBLE. IT WILL BE MAJOR NEWS STORY HERE.

5. GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, DCM SAID HE WOULD PROPOSE
FOLLOWING SCENARIO TO WASHINGTON AS POSSIBLE EFFECTIVE
MEANS OF DEALING WITH MEDIA:

A. WHEN PRIME MINISTER REACHED DECISION ON PREFERRED
DATES FOR VISIT, MOFA WOULD INFORM EMBASSY PRIVATELY.

B. EMBASSY WOULD REPORT DECISION TO WASHINGTON AND
CONFIRM ACCEPTABILITY OF DATES.

C. WHEN RESPONSE RECEIVED AMBASSADOR WOULD CALL ON
PRIME MINISTER AND GIVE HIM FORMAL INVITATION FOR
SPECIFIC DATE.

D. FOLLOWING MEETING WITH ATTENDANT MEDIA COVERAGE,
CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY WOULD BRIEF PRESS ON DETAILS
OF INVITATION. WASHINGTON COULD MAKE SIMILAR
ANNOUNCEMENT SIMULTANEOUSLY ALTHOUGH TIME DIFFERENCE
MIGHT MAKE IT PREFERABLE TO LET STORY GENERATE HERE
AND SIMPLY CONFORM IN WASHINGTON.
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6. MOFA SAYS THIS WOULD SUIT THEIR PURPOSES VERY WELL.
EMBASSY RECOMMENDS DEPARTMENT AUTHORIZE US TO PROCEED
ALONG THESE LINES.

7. WE WILL REPORT PRIME MINISTER'S DECISION BY
IMMEDIATE CABLE AS SOON AS IT IS RECEIVED.
MANSFIELD

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